

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Please cancel claims 1 through 5 and claim 9.

Please amend claims as follows:

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-- 6. (Amended) A polarization-maintaining optical fiber component produced by the steps of:  
laying two or more polarization-maintaining optical fibers side by side;  
and  
heating lengthwise portions of said polarization-maintaining optical fibers,  
fusing these heated portions, and elongating said heated portions in a lengthwise  
direction to thereby form an optical coupling section;  
wherein said polarization-maintaining optical fiber having stress applying  
sections arranged symmetrically to each other with respect to a core in a cladding  
surrounding said core, and a largest one of a plurality of circles concentrically  
provided with said core or said cladding, which do not reach said stress applying  
sections and do not include said stress applying sections within a diameter of 20  
um or greater; and said polarization-maintaining optical fiber component is a  
polarization beam splitter or a polarization beam combiner. ]

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(2) 10. (New) The polarization-maintaining optical fiber component according  
to claim 6, wherein said polarization-maintaining optical filter is a PANDA type  
polarization-maintaining optical filter.  
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